

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Janet Nakashima

The oldest of ten children born to Hitoshi and Hatsue Kuwahara, Janet Nakashima was born in Honolulu on November 23, 1921. She was raised in Pālama, where her father had opened the Pālama Shoe Company.

She was educated at Robello Lane School, Ka'iulani School, Kalākaua Intermediate School, and graduated from Farrington High School in 1940. She then went on to study dietetics at the University of Hawai'i.

She began working as a summer counselor in the day camp program at Pālama Settlement after she graduated from the university. After working for one year at Punahou School as a school dietician, she decided to go into social work and earn her master's degree at Western Reserve University (now called Case Western Reserve University) in Cleveland, Ohio.

When she returned to Hawai'i, she worked again at Pālama Settlement, in charge of youth activities. Then in 1948, she married and lived at the settlement with her husband, Shigemitsu Nakashima. After almost two years at the settlement, she moved to Pittsburgh where her husband attended graduate school. In 1951, they came back to Hawai'i, and she directed the summer program at Pālama Settlement the following year.

She worked for several years with the Girl Scouts in the Pālama area, but returned to the settlement once again in the early 1960s as the director of the group work program. Beginning in 1965, she worked with Mayor Wright Homes through a settlement-sponsored community action program. In 1968, she was hired at the newly established regional mental health center at Pālama Settlement.

She continued her career in social work including work with the Hospital Improvement Program; Susannah Wesley Community Center; Model Cities; the Special Education Center of O'ahu; and the Ko'olauloa Counseling Center, from which she retired in 1996.

Tape No. 27-5-1-97

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Janet Nakashima (JN)

Honolulu, O'ahu

February 4, 1997

BY: Holly Yamada (HY)

HY: This is an interview with Janet Nakashima for the Pālama Settlement project. It's February 4, 1997, and the interviewer is Holly Yamada. [The interview is at the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa in what was then called Porteus Hall.]

Okay, let's start with when and where you were born.

JN: Oh. I was born in Honolulu, on November 23, 1921.

HY: Okay. We need to talk a little bit about your parents' background.

JN: 'Kay my dad, Hitoshi Kuwahara, was born in 1897 and came to the islands when he was about sixteen, seventeen years old. His parents had preceded him to work in the plantations. After graduating from high school in Japan, he had (planned to go on to college as he had) received a scholarship. (However,) he was very concerned about news that his mother was very ill. So he chose to come here. (He found his mother very frail and decided to stay here.)

My mother [Hatsue Kuwahara, née Shichida] was born in Hawai'i. When her mother came in October of 1901, she was pregnant with my mother, who was born then on February 18, 1902. So she is (a) local born, (nisei).

My dad ran a shoe business. He learned to repair shoes from a Chinese cobbler and then gradually started learning how to make shoes. He opened Pālama Shoe Company in Pālama in the early 1920s, and my mother worked along with him.

HY: And where in the birth order are you?

JN: I'm the oldest of ten children.

HY: And did you folks live---where were you living at that time?

JN: Let's see now. When I was born, my (paternal) grandparents and my (parents lived) in Waipahu. Then, when my dad opened the (shoe) shop in Pālama, I guess, we moved into (the) Pālama area. I don't know how old I was then, but I grew up in Pālama. (I should make a note here that as the first born, I was born in Honolulu at my maternal grandparents' home as

was the custom of the old country—both sets of grandparents were from Kumamoto.)

HY: Did you ever work in the shoe store, or do you remember helping?

JN: Well, as I grew older, yeah. I (used to help) watch the store when it was open—in those days we used to open early, like 6:30 [A.M.] or so. I remember minding the store. (Dad) had a small retail outlet (besides repairing shoes). He gradually started manufacturing work shoes, children's and women's sandals, (and slippers). At one time—especially during World War II years—he extended the factory in the back of the (shoe store) and had a large number of employees. They (made) work shoes for the Kāne'ohe [Naval Air Station] at the time. He used used tires for the sole of these work shoes. Anyway, I used to mind the store, but didn't help with the actual making of (shoes). I didn't know how to do that. (Chuckles)

HY: What now---during the war then, did it become a fairly profitable business because of the influx of military . . .

JN: Well yeah, they did all right I think, to a certain extent. But because of my dad's alien status, there were some unsure moments. Like, he got taken in for interrogation (by the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation]). But (chuckles) we laugh about it now—I don't know whether this is the truth or not—but my dad told us that they (the FBI) let him go because he told them, "Who's gonna support my ten children?" Anyway he did not get interned. But I know that they (had) some (cash flow problems). (There were a) couple of semesters I couldn't take the full course [load] because it was hard to pay the full tuition. I managed to graduate with my class by going to summer sessions to make up the classes (I missed).

So on the one hand, I know they were doing okay, and yet for whatever reason, they (had) financial problems at the same time.

HY: Do you have any recollection about who were the customers outside of the Kāne'ohe marines?

JN: Sears was a big outlet, and several of the (smaller shoe) stores. (Also) many individuals used to come, especially women (to order) sandals. The women (were) waitresses (or sales persons), who had to stand on their feet a lot. (They) found my dad's sandals very comfortable. So there were people from the community, too.

HY: Was it mostly a wholesale place?

JN: More wholesale than retail, yeah. He used to sell some Mainland shoes, but gradually that just got (discontinued) and he focused on the manufacturing aspect (of the business).

HY: Can you talk a little bit about what your home life was like as a kid?

JN: Well, let's see. (I was) the oldest (of ten children). My aunt—my dad's younger sister—lived with us until she went to Japan to get married just before (WWII). She was like a big sister to me. I also had two sets of) grandparents. My paternal grandfather passed away (quite) early, so I (only) have vague recollections of him. My maternal grandmother, although frail—she had asthma—was basically a very strong woman. Being the first grandchild (on) both sides of the family, I got a lot of attention.

My grandma Kuwahara used to tell me a lot of Japanese folktales. I remember lying next to her (at bed time) and she would tell me (many) different stories. I used to like that. When she had her asthmatic coughing jag, I would massage her (back). We were very (close). I understand that (grandma) used to carry me on her back to take me to (Japanese[-language]) school when (I was) in kindergarten. I don't remember that, but I was told that. She passed away when I was in the sixth grade. (By the way, we all slept on the floor on futons.)

HY: What about chores and that kind of thing? Were you---did you have more responsibility as the oldest child?

JN: You'd think I would, and yet (because) we used to have household help (for cooking and minding the younger children (as well as) some of the household chores, I didn't (have as much responsibility).

My dad (placed) a lot of emphasis on education, because he missed out on his (own) college education. He pretty much taught himself English. He was a very studious man. He was always studying and reading.

I (liked to cook), so I remember when the help or my grandmother would be cooking, I would ask for some of the ingredients and do a little cooking on the side. In intermediate [school] we (learned) to cook (in) homemaking (class). And I would try (the dishes) at home. In those days, we had this old-fashioned gas stove, and (to bake,) we would have to put a portable oven on top (of the gas burners). My aunt used to do a lot of baking. (My) favorite was her spice cake for our birthdays. During the hot summer months, I used to make orangeade or lemonade for the workmen (in Dad's shoe factory). Things like that I used to do. (We did take turns washing dishes, sweeping and mopping the floors. Before we bought a washing machine, I recall washing clothes in the bathtub—there were a lot of diapers to wash.)

HY: Was that unusual, to have hired help to do household . . .

JN: You know, I don't know. Probably.

HY: Who was it that was your hired help?

JN: Oh, I can remember . . .

HY: I mean, was it family members, or were they somebody outside?

JN: Outside. One was a family friend, and she was a real nice, very nice lady. And then we had an elderly woman (who) was taking care of a disabled husband. She was strange, and I didn't feel comfortable with her. (Later,) we had a young woman who was—she became a nurse later—was going to Japanese[-language] school and helping us out. So no, they weren't family members.

HY: Where did you go to elementary school?

JN: I started out at Robello [Lane] School the first four years, and then two years at Ka'iulani School. My mother (also) attended (Ka'iulani School). After the sixth grade, I went to Kalākaua [Intermediate School] for [grades] seven, eight, and nine. Then (I attended)

Farrington [High School], (graduating in 1940 with the second graduating class).

HY: Now, you said your father really stressed getting a good education. Did he guide you at all in your career choice?

JN: No, not really. He pretty much let us go on our own. When I was going to high school—teaching was considered one of the choice professions. (However,) somehow I (had a strong feeling that) teaching was something I was not about to (get) into. (Then) because I enjoyed cooking a lot—it's a strange reason (perhaps)—but I went into home economics. And again, instead of taking the vocational teaching aspect of home ec[onomics], I went into dietetics and institutional management.

HY: Just to go back a little bit again, what was it like in the community? Do you remember playing with other kids in the community, or did you play with your siblings, or community . . .

JN: Well, yeah. We lived right in Pālama, near the corner of Dillingham [Blvd.] and [N.] King [Street].

(The original) Pālama theater was right next door to our building. There was a little alley (between our buildings) and a (small) residential (area) in the back. (There was a classmate who lived in the back.) We used to go to school together. We used to walk to school, (and often) played together. I (also) had a few good friends further up King Street towards 'A'ala (Park). In those days, there were a lot of Japanese(-owned) businesses (in the area). Nisshodo [wholesale and retail confectioners], the *senbei* maker, (Uyeda Shoe Store, a pharmacist,) Kawatani Store, (which) I think (was) a dry goods store, (et cetera). One of the (daughters of Kawatani Store) was my classmate and I used to play (with her a lot).

HY: What was mostly the ethnic mix of people in those days?

JN: In those days, I guess there were more Japanese up to (the) 'A'ala area, as far as I could see. And even the stores were mostly Japanese. I had some English school friends from the 'A'ala [and] Hall street area, (who were) Chinese.

HY: So you graduated from Farrington in 1940, and then you . . .

JN: I went on to college.

HY: And you were pursuing dietetics?

JN: Mm hmm [yes].

HY: Did you go to UH [University of Hawai'i]?

JN: Yeah.

HY: And how long were you at UH then?

JN: I finished in June of '44.

HY: How did the war [World War II] affect your schooling?

JN: It certainly made things very different. For one thing, there were less men on the campus. And I remember we used to take the bus (to and from) school. (However,) when there was a bus strike, (we were fortunate that some men, who were in school and drove, gave us rides to and from school).

HY: This was around the time, or I guess, the later part of your schooling at UH, you started working at Pālama Settlement.

JN: Pālama Settlement, yeah.

HY: How is it that you got involved with Pālama Settlement?

JN: When the war started, I (became) active with the campus YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association]. Many of my friends had left school to go to do war work and stuff like that. And I guess I felt the need to have something else in my life than just schoolwork. The campus Y[WCA] (program made a big impact on me. The involvement) helped me to mature as a person, I think. Mrs. [Delta] Hanson who was the campus director at the time, was a fabulous lady.

HY: Of the Y . . .

JN: Y—campus YW[CA], yeah. We had a---I don't know what they (were) called, director, executive, whatever. But she was just a fantastic person. Anyway, I became very active in that. And through that I got to meet this (dynamic) gal, her name was Betty Vellum at the time—she had just finished college on the Mainland. And I can't remember now whether she came to work for the Y itself or something. But anyway, she was another vivacious lady and just really opened up—blew my mind, I guess. And got me looking at—I didn't know the word "social work" at the time—but you know, social (service) activities, relationship, what have you.

Anyway, somehow through that I learned about Pālama Settlement. Although I should say---I knew Pālama Settlement was there, I grew up in the area. But then instead of going to the cannery where most of (my friends) went to work during the summers, I got a job as a summer counselor in the day camp program which Mr. and Mrs. [Paul and Billie] Anderson ran. And Mrs. Anderson—Billie Anderson—was another great lady. I enjoyed working with her and I learned a lot. Gradually my interest began to shift from dietetics to something different. I (first) worked (at Pālama the) summer (I graduated from UH as a dietetics and institutional major). I worked for two summers, the second summer was just before I went to Cleveland, [Ohio].

HY: Were you a counselor then, too?

JN: Yeah. Yeah. So the first year must've been just (after) my senior year 'cause after I finished school, I worked for a year as a school dietician at the upper elementary school for Punahou [School], which was located on the University [of Hawai'i] campus at the time. And then by the time I finished that, I was pretty sure that I wanted to go into social work instead of continuing with dietetics. I (had been) debating (whether to do) my internship for dietetics or

go into social work, and I chose social work at the time.

HY: Now, when you were younger did you use the facilities at Pālama Settlement at all?

JN: Not really. I do recollect when I was in elementary school and I was studying the Japanese koto for about a year or so. We had a koto concert in the auditorium of Pālama Settlement. And I remember thinking what a huge place this was. Then after I grew up, and when I (started) working at Pālama and went in to the same room, I couldn't (believe) this (was) the auditorium that seemed so huge at the time. (HY laughs.)

HY: It shrunk, huh?

JN: Yeah. But other than that I didn't really—oh! Okay. When I was in elementary school, in the fourth grade, we were all taken to Pālama Settlement to learn to swim in that huge pool. On Mondays, when the pool is being cleaned and emptied, and they start filling it, our good old Nelson Kawakami and his staff taught swimming to all the kids from the area elementary schools. I remember going the first time, climbing down that long ladder, it seemed. We were told to put our head into the water, which I could not do.

I got scared after that and never went back. To this day, I don't really know how to swim. I would have some kind of excuse (every week) and my good old fourth grade teacher, she was such a doll, she let (me and a few) others—who may have had legitimate reasons, I don't know—stay back.

During the war years, before I started working I think, I remember going to an evening dance class, ballroom dancing class. Also—I guess this was after I started working as a summer counselor—I got to know Mrs. [Alice] Barnes who opened up a music school. She started a small (singing) group, just singing all kinds of folk songs. So yeah, I used to go to that, too, during the war years. That's right. I didn't take part in the regular club program and stuff like that.

HY: So as a counselor during the summers, what age group did you work with? Were they really young ones?

JN: Elementary school. They were all elementary school (students). I remember—was it the first year, or was it the second year? I had some second graders, wily, energetic, little guys. And I was doing, supposedly, story acting. And anyway, one afternoon, I just couldn't handle the (boys). I just got so frustrated, I remember walking out of the room. But Billie Anderson, she was just a very calm, wonderful person. She listened to me, let me spout, and said, "These things happen. I think you should go back now, and just continue." I still remember that day—storming out of (the classroom. I did go back and managed to complete the class.)

HY: Got to you.

JN: Got to me!

(Laughter)

JN: That was a good challenge, I guess.

HY: Now were these the fresh air camps?

JN: No. Fresh air camp was out in the country [Waialua]. Talking about fresh air camp, I remember during the elementary school days, I was always very thin. Underweight, they used to call us. You know, they would weigh you, and then you'd get [designated] either red, blue or white. If you're healthy you get white. If you're sort of in between you get blue. If you're underweight you're red, and I was always red. And I remember teacher saying I should go to a fresh air camp. I never went to it.

HY: So you wanted to change your career then, after you worked for a year at Punahou [School].

JN: Yeah, yeah. Definitely, I changed my career. (Chuckles)

HY: So what happened then?

JN: Then I went to Cleveland to do my graduate work. And I guess I chose Cleveland—by that time I had become a little bit more aware of what they call social group work. 'Cause most . . .

HY: Could you talk about what that is?

JN: Yeah, okay. 'Cause most people thought of social work as the casework, welfare type, like that. But social group work was working with people in groups. And one of my good friends had gone ahead, a year ahead of me. It made it easier for me to follow, and so I did. Social group work was using the group work process, which was developed by Grace Coyle, (who) taught at Western Reserve [University] at the time. She was the first to really develop that.

But before I went (to Western Reserve, I met with) Esther Park, who was—she's legendary—she's still living here in (Honolulu at the) Arcadia [Retirement Residence]. She was working at the Richards Street YW (at the time). She counselled me about Western Reserve, and all that. She (had attended) Western Reserve before the war years. (Later, Esther went to work for the National YWCA and then spent many years working for the YWCA in Korea until she retired and returned to Honolulu.)

So anyway, I was in Cleveland for a year and a half. When I went to Cleveland, the war was just ending.

HY: How was it that you were able to finance your college?

JN: Oh. (Laughs) Yeah. My graduate work?

HY: Your graduate work.

JN: Well, my dad did have a lot of considerations about my wanting to go to Cleveland. And at first he was really against it. But . . .

HY: Now why was that?

JN: His reasoning was that with the U.S. at war with Japan—he had heard through a friend's

shortwave radio, that news coming from Japan was that Japan was gonna attack USA on the East Coast. And he felt Cleveland was (just) a little too close to the East Coast. However, Mr. Theodore Rhea, who was the executive director of Pālama Settlement, when I was working during the summers and making plans to go for my graduate work, came to me when he learned that I was planning to do my graduate work in group work. And he said, "How are you financially?"

I said, "Well, you know, I don't know. I guess my dad will help me." (Laughs)

And he said, "Well, let me see if I can get you a scholarship." And he explained that there was a group of people in charge of trust funds I guess, who were contemplating putting some money together for helping young people from Hawai'i to pursue their studies. And before I knew it, he came to me and he said, "I have \$1,000 for you." Just like that. I did not apply, I did not sign any form. He just did all the work and brought me the news.

So when my dad heard that, he relented and said, "Well, I guess if Mr. Rhea is that much willing to invest (in you,) I guess you better go." So, that helped pay all my tuition for the four semesters.

HY: And then you came back then. . .

JN: I came back and. . .

HY: And back to Pālama Settlement.

JN: (In February, 1947 I returned to) Pālama Settlement to fulfill my supposed—I was supposed to work (for) two years, but Mr. Rhea let me go after about a year and a half (as Shig [Shigemitsu Nakashima] and I got married in February 1948. We left for Pittsburgh in late August so Shig could enroll in the School of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh.) I was in charge of the youth activities [at Pālama Settlement].

HY: Can you talk about what you did? Maybe on a daily basis, what kind of activities?

JN: Well, (laughs) I was the club leader for two boys groups. One was the more local, Asian American kids, and the other was the (local) *kolohe* group, I called 'em. They (were) part-Hawaiian kids and all that. They were a little more rugged. I was the leader for the two groups.

HY: What age group was this?

JN: They were intermediate years. I also taught Chinese cooking to some young (working) girls, all because the gal who was in charge of the homemaking program decided that she was gonna get married. As soon as I came back (from Cleveland,) she said, "Now you can take over the classes." She knew I had a home ec[onomics] background. Well I didn't know anything about Chinese cooking, but with her help, somehow or other I managed to teach Chinese cooking. And had these club groups, (too).

HY: Now what would you have these kids do, these boys?

JN: Well, you know essentially we (tried) to help them carry out activities that they were interested in. So, holding meetings and their learning to handle their dues, et cetera. But I still remember the *kolohe* group. (Laughs) Pālama Settlement has this very—doesn't look that high anymore, but at that point it did—these columns in (front of) the main building. Still there. Smooth, sort of, and one evening these guys told me, "I bet you one of the fellows can climb this."

I said, "Nah, he can't."

They said, "Okay, we bet you dues." I took the bet (laughs) and this kid just [climbed] right up. You know how some of these people can climb coconut trees? My jaws dropped. They thought that was so funny. (Laughs)

And this same group, they wanted to go camping. And at that time we had a camp at Waialua, Pālama-by-the-Sea. And so I took 'em. This was during the Christmas holidays, and I took a girlfriend, and (Shig) came along, too, as chaperones. And (in the) middle of the night I hear a car chug-chug-chug-chugging. And I see this car in front of the boys' cabin and an older guy there. I told him, "What you doing here?"

"Oh, came to visit."

I said, "Well you can't do that." Anyway, I had to stand and be tough you know, (laughs) but I managed to get the guy off the grounds. Then later, these guys burned firecrackers.

HY: The kids or . . .

JN: The kids. (Chuckles) Yeah, they did all kinds of things like that. Somehow or other I managed to survive that. But I tell you, I learned a lot. And another thing I learned was that here in Hawai'i it's hard to know poverty, because with the sunshine and all, you don't see the squalor. Well, in Cleveland where I did my fieldwork, in the Black neighborhood—in those days we called them Negroes—housing projects and all. And during the winter months, you could see poverty. 'Cause the kids had sweaters or coats that are full of holes, their shoes have holes. And you really see poverty, which I never really saw in Hawai'i, yeah?

And so when we're planning this camping trip, I'm telling the kids, "Okay, everybody bring your sheet and towels." And we go to camp. These kids don't have that kind of stuff. I didn't even think that. You know? So, I learned a lot of stuff about life as it is, not as we would like to see it. That was a good learning experience for me.

And then Shig and I got married in February of '48, which was only a year after I had come back. But Mr. Rhea was---by that time, my husband had decided he wanted to study social work in Pittsburgh, [Pennsylvania], which was gonna be that fall. So I actually had another half year to give to Pālama, but you know Mr. Rhea. He's such a generous person. "No that's all right. You go." So he let me off the hook, and so we went to Pittsburgh.

HY: I think this might be a good time to . . .

JN: Break.

HY: Go on a break.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

HY: Okay, you were talking about going to Pittsburgh. . .

JN: We went to Pittsburgh.

HY: Mr. Rhea allowed you to leave a little bit early.

JN: Yeah.

HY: Now before that though, you were actually living in Pālama Settlement with your husband.

JN: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

HY: Now what was---what were the facilities like?

JN: On the grounds of Pālama Settlement [there] was this other building where the Strong-Carter Dental Clinic was. And upstairs—I think at one time there were offices for other programs—but about the time we came back to work at Pālama Settlement, Mr. Rhea saw a need for a place for young people to stay. You know, those going to school, college, like that. And also they needed volunteers and part-time help with the different club programs. So, he opened the upstairs into like, a little dormitory. We had a communal kitchen. And so after Shig and I got married, we got a couple of rooms for ourselves.

HY: So you lived in a dorm?

JN: We lived there. Yeah, sort of like a dorm, although we had our own little unit. (The) kitchen and bathrooms (were) shared with the other (residents). There were a lot of single girls and men, and people working (in) other places. But whoever lived there gave some time to the program—group work program—at Pālama Settlement. We had fun.

HY: Now did the director also live on the facilities?

JN: No. Mr. Rhea did not, but Paul and Billie Anderson did, yeah. They had a whole apartment of their own on the grounds.

HY: Now prior to that you—prior to getting married—where were you living?

JN: With my parents in Pālama.

HY: Okay. So your family's house?

JN: Yeah. It was just within walking distance so I used to walk to work.

HY: I guess I didn't ask you what your family house was like. If you can describe that a little bit.

JN: Well, for the most part we lived upstairs of the shoe shop. Basically it was just a large room that (was) cut up, or separated with shoji doors. I did have a little room for myself (after my aunt went to Manchuria with her military husband after her marriage.) But otherwise, most of the time we all slept on the floor, on futons, in a row. My parents had their own little corner, nook. And then later when I was in (college), my uncle built an addition in the back over the shoe factory roof). I had the use of that room. So I guess being the oldest I had a little bit more privileges, or privacy.

When I was very young—I guess when I was going to Robello School—for a short while, we lived in a cottage right next to the school. I remember just going through the fence to get to school. But that was a very short period. Otherwise I grew up in Pālama (over Dad's shoe store and factory).

HY: Now you're on your way to Pittsburgh, on the Mainland again . . .

JN: Mm hmm.

HY: Maybe you can talk a little bit about what it was like. Both that time and when you went to Cleveland too, in terms of how it was different, and how you adjusted.

JN: Okay. Well maybe I should start with Cleveland because that was a big turning point in my life. Besides going far away, and my first journey out of O'ahu—actually, I never got to even the neighbor islands before that—we had to leave the islands on just forty-eight-hour notice 'cause we were still at war.

Anyway, (shortly) after Hiroshima was bombed (on) [August 6, 1945], we got word that we should be ready to board the ship on a Sunday. And (when) we got on board ship (that) Sunday, (there) were about three hundred wounded soldiers from Saipan. They were all on the decks. And so, the (cabin) where, you know, might ordinarily have one or two people, we were stacked, six of us in the room. It was very crowded.

We board that (ship) Sunday, about noon, (and) about an hour or two later we (heard) whistles and sirens. We all ran up to the top deck to look over by Merchant Street. We couldn't see too much, but there was a lot of noise and cheers, because I guess they said the war was gonna end. And then, I guess—I think it was like, Tuesday (while on our way to San Francisco)—we got word that the war officially ended. (The ship was blacked out and there was a convoy that escorted our trip. We were kept informed of any news about the end of the war by our steward. I was a poor sailor and was flat on my back for most of the trip.)

When we reached San Francisco a couple of days later, it was right after the San Francisco riot. (People had gone wild celebrating the end of WWII.) It was quite an experience. I had one, two, three others with me. Two were sisters of my classmates at UH—one was going to Massachusetts to a school for the blind, one was going to New York to college, and another friend was going to New York to study dress designing. Four of us traveled together. Miss Esther Park had told me, "If you need any help in San Francisco, call the director of the San Francisco YW." She had given me the phone number.

So we get off the ship (and) don't know how to use the telephone. You know, the Mainland kind is different. Luckily, Dr. [Arthur] Marder who was our German-language instructor at the university, happened to be on the same boat. He showed me how to use the phone. I got hold of—I can't remember her name now—just in time (as) she was about ready to leave (the agency). She said, "If Esther Park told you to (call,) come on over." She made room for us on different floors—they just put extra cots and we got to stay there until (we were able to continue our trip). I was also (advised by Ms. Park) to get in touch with the Traveller's Aid (Society). You know it's a social (service agency).

We got (in touch with) the Traveller's Aid (worker who) helped us get the train tickets, and stuff like that. I also got in touch with one of my dad's business friends, (Mr. Herbert Cohen) in San Francisco. My dad used to buy leather and stuff from him. He was quite impressed that we were all going to the East Coast (to study). On the day we were to leave, he brought each of us a box lunch—we didn't know about those things—to take on the train. (It was a new experience for all of us. We were on a Pullman train for several days and nights. One day, I was walking around barefooted when the porter saw me. He was quite concerned and upset 'cause he was afraid I'd get infected. I separated from the others in Chicago and transferred to a train to Cleveland.)

My girlfriend, who had gone (to Western Reserve in June), came to meet me at the train station. We lugged my heavy suitcase on the streetcar. I was ready to take a taxi, but she said, "No, we're going to take the streetcar." So we got on the streetcar and got to the co-op house, where I lived for the next year and a half.

This was an experience in itself. It was an interracial, (co-ed) co-op, and you know, until then I had never heard of such a thing. (Of course, UH had) Hale Laulima, which was a co-op house (for students from the neighbor islands) and I (spent) a semester as student house manager (as part of my required course). But this was all female, and cooperative in terms of the gals took turns cooking and cleaning and all. My job was to arrange (their) work schedules, and (plan the meals and) buy the food, and so (forth).

But this was a totally new ball game. It was called (the) Roosevelt Co-op. The (twenty-five or so residents) were the ones that started this (co-op house). You know, (they were) the idealistic, bright, young people. And that's where I learned that being a Jew wasn't a race, (that) it was a religion. We had Black people, (Caucasians,) and then, at that time there were (also) five of us from Hawai'i all of a sudden. And another nisei gal from California, no, Oregon originally. But anyway, living in the co-op house was a big, big learning experience for me. And to this day, I have some friends from that era that I still communicate with, and I (visit) when I get to the East Coast. Anyway, that was a big, big, big learning experience.

And then the school itself—we had to do fieldwork—and my first assignment was at a place called the Friendly Inn, a settlement house in a Black neighborhood (in) the slums. That was quite an experience, and I still remember, the war had just ended, and I think for most of them (members of the settlement house) I was one of the first Orientals they saw. They refused to see me as an American of Japanese ancestry. I think just the word Japanese (made) them think of Japan. So they kept calling me the "Chinese teach." Instead of teacher they called me "Chinese teach."

HY: How did you feel?

JN: I tell you, it was kind of a scary experience. For one thing, physically the kids, the boys who wanted me to be their club leader were huge kids, you know? (Chuckles) Again, I tell you, I learned so much about myself. How insulated, and protected we are in Hawai'i. You know, we're just so comfortable. Boy, I got jarred so many times.

The director of the settlement house was a brilliant German Jew, who with his family had escaped to the U.S. And he was at once tough—oh, I just didn't know how to deal with him. He had me scared most of the time. But anyway, I was fortunate in that the social worker (at Friendly Inn (Mrs. Julia Newman)—a lovely Black lady, smart gal—and I became good friends. She used to counsel me. She explained to me what Mr. (Henry) Ollendorf was like, and why he was the way he was, so not to be intimidated.

I (also) remember he was tough on one of the other White girls who had just graduated from Western Reserve. (She) was on the staff. He was rough on her, too. And (Mrs. Newman) pointed out to me that with people like Mr. Ollendorf, you have to stand up to him. But see, I was nowhere assertive at that stage of my life. And I just cowered every time I went in front of him. I (also) remember, they had living quarters upstairs, and this White worker had invited me to supper a couple of times when I would have to be there in the afternoon, and work at night, too. Mrs. Ollendorf one time invited me specially, but I just felt so uncomfortable, I made an excuse and I didn't go. Later I found out she had invited me because her birthday and my birthday was (on) the same (day). And I felt bad, here she had tried to reach out (to me) and I couldn't accept it. That (was) in November (1945).

Shortly after, there was a Christmas party. I went and took a friend with me. But as we started singing Christmas carols—this was my first Christmas (away from home)—tears kept streaming (down). I couldn't hold back my tears. I guess suddenly I began feeling homesick, or something. And so I dashed into one of the gals' rooms, and I just cried my heart out. (Laughs) Oh, that was so funny. Now, I can say that. But, at the co-op, people were very kind and helpful—we just had a nice family kind of thing. People supporting each other and I felt safe there.

HY: So when you ventured out into the field, you started to feel . . .

JN: It wasn't easy. And in fact, I felt that Mr. Ollendorf was extremely rigid. I had gone to Cleveland a little before school started, I stopped in thinking, "Oh, I'll go see what this place is like," and I introduced myself. Then he tells me, "Okay, I'll see you next Monday morning at 8:00 [A.M.]." I said, "Oh but Mr. Ollendorf, that's the day I register at school."

"You can register after (the staff meeting)."

What the dickens? You know, here I hadn't even started school and he's telling (me) I gotta (go to the agency).

So. You gotta go to his staff meeting, and then register late, later than the other (students). I guess it didn't (really) matter, but that's the kind (of person he was). Then during the Christmas vacation where everybody had two full weeks off, I'm planning a trip to New York, because I gotta do something different. And he announces (that) there will be a staff meeting on January 2. And I tell him, "Oh, but that's still school vacation."

"You come to the staff meeting."

We had to leave New York early and come back on New Year's Day. It was, you know, that kind of very cold [attitude], it seemed to me. I just didn't feel at ease there. With that kind of thing, I didn't know how much I was learning. No matter what I did, he always had some kind of attack. And instead of being able to think clearly and learn from it, I'd just freeze. So (Mrs. Newman) told me, "Janet, I've seen Mr. Ollendorf do this to other workers. Ask for a change of placement."

I went to Miss [Grace] Coyle, because that's what Esther Park (had advised) me, "If you have any problems, go to Miss Coyle." So I went. (I had difficulty talking to Miss Coyle as again tears flowed as I tried to explain my dilemma at Friendly Inn without making Mr. Ollendorf wrong.) She then told me to see the (registrar. When I went to see Mr. Roberts) he said, "Oh well, you go and have your Christmas vacation. Maybe you'll feel differently when you come back." When I came back Mr. Ollendorf was a little different, (a bit more gentle). So I thought, "Oh, maybe I can make it."

(But,) Julia said, "Don't let (him) fool you. See that you get the change."

So I persisted. (Mr.) Ollendorf didn't like this, and he gave me a terrible grade, but I did get out of that place. I (did my fieldwork) in an Italian neighborhood settlement house for the next three semesters.

HY: And how was that?

JN: That worked out a lot better, (my) supervisor was a woman. Much more, (laughs) you know, soft. And she was stern, too, but I was more at ease. So I started (at the Alta House) in February. Then during the summer months, I remember we had lots of fun. (Miss Lillia Honsa, my supervisor,) was on vacation so I had a faculty member overseeing (my fieldwork). There was a very creative art person on the (settlement house) staff, who lived on the grounds. She and I cooked up what we called, "make believe travel." And we used Hawai'i as one (of the destinations). We had our own summer May Day program. I taught the kids the only hula I know, "Little Brown Gal." (We had a May Day queen, et cetera.)

HY: These are the Italian kids?

JN: Yeah, yeah. And I still remember I have a picture of this gal (in my mind). We dressed her up in a long (white) gown, made a flower wreath (for her head) and stuff like that. We made leis, and we made hula skirts for the kids, and we had lots of fun. The kids had loads of fun. And then, during the fall semester, my supervisor got me involved with a social action group. The settlement houses (in Cleveland) were interested in (going to Washington D.C. to contact our legislators) about unfinished social business. I got to go to Washington D.C. with that group. That was really exciting. Yeah, and that's when we saw Senator [Robert Alfonso] Taft and . . .

HY: What kind of . . .

JN: This was to—with a lot of other representatives from different social agencies—to talk to the legislators about unfinished social business, social legislation.

HY: What kind of issues were . . .

JN: I can't remember specifically now, 'cause at that point a lot of this was way over my head, really. I was just caught up in the excitement of being with people (who were into social action). A lot of the leaders really knew what they were (doing)—we were just tagging along. This was right at the turn---when the war ended.

HY: I wanted to ask you about the response of the—how did the Black neighborhood kids that you worked with, and the Italian group, how did they respond to you? Was it different or . . .

JN: I guess I felt more at ease with the Italian kids. Maybe it was the time, too, you know. [The] war had just ended when I was there. So as I said, they could not see me as a Japanese (American). So I was a "Chinese teach." But other than that, they treated me with respect and all.

It's just that it was more my (own) fear of that strangeness, the poverty around, and being enclosed in a small meeting room with these huge guys, and the kind of things that they talk about I didn't really understand. To them, at that point, jackets were very important. So they had to do fund-raising to buy jackets and all, and I remember we had to throw a dance. Stuff like that.

But with the Italian kids—I guess for some reason I worked more with the younger kids at that time. I got to know some women, too. I had a women's group or something, and they were all very friendly. They saw me more as a Hawaiian. I think they identified me with Hawai'i more, because—oh, that's right. The tidal wave, that year of the tidal wave [1946]—the first, April 1, tidal wave. I didn't know what that meant, but the staff at the settlement house were the ones that came to tell me there was a tidal wave in Hawai'i. I didn't know what that was. Luckily my family were okay. So I think they identified me more with someone coming from Hawai'i. That was a curiosity for them.

HY: Now. . . . Then after coming back to Pālama Settlement, and then leaving again to go to Pittsburgh, how was that experience similar or different?

JN: That was another stage of my growth I guess. I was just real fortunate in meeting (Miss) Margaret Berry, who was the head of a settlement house in Pittsburgh, Soho Community House. Soho had two satellite centers in the (predominantly) Black interracial housing projects. We called it "up the hill." (The main center of) Soho was right near the river.

Anyway, at the student and wives picnic to introduce the new (social work) students, we (ran into) Dr. (Marian) Hathaway (whom we had met in Honolulu earlier). She was one of those really progressive liberals, and she had come to Honolulu prior to our going to Pittsburgh (to talk about licensing social workers). We met her through another friend who had just (returned from University of) Pittsburgh. (After meeting) Dr. Hathaway, Shig (decided) that Pittsburgh was where he wanted to go (to study social work). So anyway, we go to this picnic and Miss Margaret Berry comes up to me and says, "I understand you're looking for a job."

Well, I had not planned to work for about a month, (but Miss Berry asked me to see her, which I did—one of the best decisions I'd ever made). Later, I found out that Dr. Hathaway had told Margaret, "Anybody Shig married should be okay." (Laughs) So I was being hired on

the strength of my husband! (Laughs) Whatever.

To this day we're good friends. Margaret was a fabulous director (and person). She is a very (delicate)-looking lady, but what a strong person, with real convictions. (Soho was) another place where I learned a lot. (Margaret) had an interracial board, her staff of professionals were interracial. Her focus was (always) on how can we make our neighborhood a place where the children and adults can get along with each other. There were (only) a few remaining Jewish and Polish (families in the neighborhood). Most of them had moved out, and our area was becoming more and more Black. Up the hill was Kingsley House, which was a big Jewish settlement house.

All the other settlement house directors (in Pittsburgh) were men. Margaret was the only woman. But she was the leader of all the settlement directors. They all looked up to her for direction and leadership. It was really, for me, a wonderful opportunity to experience watching how she worked with all kinds of people. Children, and the staff, and the poor. So I was real fortunate in having that type of experience.

HY: What work did you do then? Did you continue social group work?

JN: Well, she hired me to be what she called Program Services Director. So I didn't do the direct group work.

HY: Is that more an administrative position?

JN: Sort of. And program. Because we had all these three centers, my job was to create activities or programs that would carry out the mission of the settlement house, which was interrelationship and all that. I was (also) in charge of the (agency) newsletter. (At that time we were in touch) with a settlement house in the Soho area of France. (As Program Services Director, I was put in charge of coordinating) a musical program to kind of let the French, the Soho people in France, learn about us. (Each of the three centers planned a part of the program.) That was a big project. And boy, I had to stretch! I had to stretch, because a lot of things were new, you know?

I also coordinated volunteer recruitment (and) training. So in other words, I was support service to the staff of all the three centers. Margaret also had me do fieldwork supervision of graduate students from Pittsburgh's school of social work. One year I had a student from Carnegie-Mellon University also.

(Margaret) made sure that I had a wide range of experiences. And she took us, Shig and me, and she made us really feel at home. And she'd, on holidays, take us out on drives to different parts of the state, and like that. So, to this day we're in touch. When we go to the East Coast to see our son, we go and visit with her in Massachusetts. So, we had a rich, rich experience in Pittsburgh. People say, "What you going to Pittsburgh for?" But, I tell you we learned a lot (and had a great time).

HY: And so your husband had finished his master's in social work?

JN: Yeah, in Pittsburgh. Actually, he and I got (our master's degree at the same time, because) although I had done my schoolwork, I had never finished my thesis. Margaret (allowed me to

take a summer off from work to) finish writing my thesis. So, I got my degree the same time as Shig did, only I didn't go to my graduation. Shig (then) decided to work a year in Pittsburgh. So I got to work with Margaret for three years. Then I became *hāpai*, and so we came home in summer of '51 in time to have our oldest son (in Honolulu. Gerry was born on August 30, 1951.)

HY: Where did you live when you came back to Hawai'i?

JN: When we came home, we first stayed with my sister and brother-in-law in Kāne'ohe. They had a big house, so they put us up (until we were able to get into) the veteran's housing project in Mānoa, where Mānoa School I guess is now. (At the time,) there were all these Quonset huts, and that's where we lived (from November '51 to December '55). Then we moved to where we are now [in Kāne'ohe].

HY: Now when did you start back at Pālama Settlement?

JN: (In 1952, when Gerry was almost a year old,) I did go back to Pālama Settlement for the summer. Maki[ko] Ichiyasu who was the group work director at the time, wanted me to (run) the summer day camp program. (Mr. Walter Ehlers was the director then.)

We were living in Mānoa housing (at the time). My sister used to come out from Kāne'ohe and we'd meet at my dad's shop. She would take care of Gerry (while) I took her daughter Clare, who was a preschooler, to the Pālama Settlement preschool program. While Clare was at the preschool, I would direct the summer program.

HY: Now what was the summer program?

JN: It's a day camp. It's a day camp. The same.

HY: So it's similar to what you had done in [previous] summers.

JN: Yeah. Training the staff, selecting the staff, and directing the program, like that.

HY: Now had you noticed changes from when . . .

JN: No, at that point I didn't see any major changes. Because when I first started at Pālama Settlement during summer, that was---at that point, the Andersons were beginning to set up the group work program and going towards social work oriented programs. You know, we (still) had a strong recreation program. You know swimming, baseball, and all that kind. But they were developing the club and social group work oriented programs.

So that's why Mr. Rhea was anxious to get some of our local people trained in social group work. While we—Mike, (Michiko Higa), and myself, and (Ruby Dewa and Hazel Yonekura)—were at Western Reserve, Pālama brought three girls who had just finished graduate work at Western Reserve to be different program activity directors. After I came back in February of '47, after the summer, two (of the) girls (Elaine Paulson and June Akerland) went back to the Mainland (while the third, Bettie Burner, remained in Hawai'i).

HY: So prior to that then, were most of the counselors not from Hawai'i?

JN: Well they didn't have counselors. Well, as far as . . .

HY: Or the workers?

JN: The workers. Well, they didn't have that kind of programs. I don't know that they had club programs and such. I don't know too much about what was prior to . . .

HY: So when you say the former director, Mr. Rhea was wanting to get more local . . .

JN: Yeah. Trained professional (local) people, yeah. And then, Mr. Rhea left Pālama, sometime after we moved to Pittsburgh. He went to the (Hawai'i Heart Association in 1948). Then the Andersons left Pālama in disgust, because of the new [executive] director.

HY: Is that Eileen Watkins?

JN: Watkins. Yeah, yeah. Apparently she was something else.

HY: Why were they unhappy? Do you know?

JN: I'm not all that clear. I should remember, because we heard nothing but complaints (about her). Paul [Anderson] came back to Pittsburgh to finish his second year of social work. He had had only one year, see? So he came back while we were still in Pittsburgh. He stayed (in our apartment) with us for a while, until the rest of (his) family came. Billie Anderson worked with us at the settlement house. Then one night Eleanor Burrell, (her son Davey, Elta Brown,) and one of the gals (who had) lived (at the Pālama dorm) came, calling on us in Pittsburgh in the middle of the night. (Chuckles) They spent all night telling us about the woes of (Pālama under) Miss Watkins. (Even Nelson who never complained, couldn't stand her.) I think she finally got ousted.

Then Walt[er] Ehlers I guess, came on after she was ousted. [Dearon J. Shetanian came on as executive director in 1951. Walter Ehlers followed in 1952.] And then Maki Ichiyasu became the program director. Maki was a terrific professional. She was one of our outstanding group work leaders on O'ahu.

HY: So did you notice much difference between the Rhea administration and the Ehlers administration?

JN: No, I worked only during the summer months. I didn't know Ehlers that well. It's really both [Paul and Billie] Anderson and Maki Ichiyasu—they were the ones that I worked for. So it wouldn't be that much different.

HY: So you were—you did the summer program . . .

JN: With Maki in '52.

HY: For a couple years? Is that right?

JN: No. Just---no. Just that one summer.

HY: Oh, just the summer? Oh, okay.

JN: Just that one summer. And then, then I went to work for the Girl Scouts in '56 till '60. And again, I'm drawn to the Pālama area. Because my assignment originally was in the Kapālama area. So I worked generally in the same place. Not at Pālama Settlement though, just the Girl Scouts (and volunteers in the area).

HY: Now was that actually very different work, or was it still social group work?

JN: Again, at that time, the Girl Scouts executive, (Miss) Charlotte Whitaker, was (aware) that Girl Scouting (involved) recruiting—recruiting of the scout leaders—and training them. And she was (also) becoming more aware of the need for group work oriented staff. There were two of us with master's degrees in group work (on her staff of about four working with the scout leaders).

But actually, when it came to the program per se, I knew nothing about scouting. I had never been a Scout. I had to learn a lot of stuff from the volunteers themselves, you know? How to make the right kind of fire, and all that kind of stuff. But in terms of working with the kids using the program to work with them, that's where we applied our social work training.

Then I got to direct the summer day camp, Girl Scout day camp. What we call day camp at Pālama like that, it was more summer fun. I think we coined the word "summer fun" because we weren't doing camping activities, just more outdoors. We were doing summer fun kinds of activities. But with Girl Scouting, day camping was really teaching all the different scouting skills, and as I said, I had to depend on the volunteers (laughs) to teach that. So I ran the day camp at Bellows [Air Force Base] field one summer, and then the next couple of summers, trained the (volunteer) directors of the day camp and supervised (them). So (with) scouting, I started out in Kapālama, and then (later) worked on the Windward side.

Then I retired again to have my two younger kids. Then when my youngest son was about a year and a half, Jack Nagoshi [executive director for Pālama Settlement, 1962–64] called me to come back to Pālama Settlement. I said, "Well, I got two [young] kids."

He said, "Well, I'd rather have half a loaf than none." And so, I went to work for him on three-quarter [time] basis.

I was fortunate in getting Ellen [JN's daughter] (and Michael [JN's son]) into Mrs. Macapagal's small, day nursery at—the Aldersgate [United] Methodist Church, right on Liliha [Street]. (Chuckles) Michael was not even toilet trained, but Mrs. Macapagal said, "Oh, don't worry. We'll train him." It was a nice support group.

So I worked with Jack for a little while. He got me started in September 1963. And within a few months, (he joined the School of Social Work at UH). And then Lorin Gill took over [as executive director].

HY: This might be a good place to stop.

JN: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 27-6-2-97

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Janet Nakashima (JN)

Honolulu, O'ahu

February 10, 1997

BY: Holly Yamada (HY)

HY: This is a continuation of an interview with Janet Nakashima. This is February 10, 1997. We're at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. The interviewer is Holly Yamada.

I think last time we left off with Jack Nagoshi had hired you—rehired you.

JN: And I had said September '63, but I think it's more like September '64. Now, this part is a little hazy for me.

HY: And what kind of work did he . . .

JN: Well he wanted me to be director of the group work program, which would be clubs and recreation, et cetera. And I did it on three-quarter time basis at the time. You know setting up groups, find appropriate volunteers, training staff, et cetera. At that time the recreation program was still part of the group work section.

HY: Did you actually do the training for the . . .

JN: Well, yeah. I did staff (training), conduct staff meetings, and supervise the program staff. (It) wasn't a big staff.

HY: Who were the people that were on your staff?

JN: Oh, I can't remember them all.

HY: Were they people from the local community?

JN: Yeah. Most of them were. There was a Caucasian girl, who had been there before I came on. (A young) man came from the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association], a local boy, Calvin Arata. And (there was) Louis Kaninau, (a former Pālama Settlement member who) did some recreation work as well (as lead) a club or two. There were a couple of other local guys. Most of them were local.

HY: Were these---was your staff students, or were they people that were in the social work profession?

JN: Well, none of them had done any graduate work. They were either college grads or in the field of recreation.

HY: Maybe you could talk a little bit about who were the people that you serviced. Like the kids.

JN: Okay, by this time, the neighborhood certainly had changed. There were more Samoan families, for instance. Jack Nagoshi left the settlement house (for the UH School of Social Work) shortly after I started and Lorin Gill became the new [executive] director. Lorin was quite interested in helping the Samoan youth to be better integrated into the community. He did things like bringing in Mrs. Fay Alailima, whose (husband) Vaiao [Alailima] was Samoan. (Mr. and Mrs. Alailima were brought in to) help the staff to understand the culture of the Samoan families and to help us understand their behaviors.

(For instance, we learned that) they have a strong familial system (and they consider) what's yours is mine. You know, if I needed (something you had,) I could help myself. (This) of course, doesn't work over here (and created problems). Lorin set up things like that. I (asked to be relieved of this position) by June (1965).

HY: Why is that?

JN: I had some difficulty with one of the staff members there who was a very sensitive, intelligent lady, who seemed to know how to deal with the disen[franchised] local kids. But there were some things she did that I just couldn't stomach. She had a judgement for instance, that (Calvin) didn't know how to deal with these kids. And she used [to] do things to me, that were undermining staff relationships and stuff. I discussed this very honestly with Lorin, so he knew I wasn't very happy.

I offered my resignation by June. But then, around that time, Pālama was getting heavily involved in the OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity] programs. He offered me a position working out of Mayor Wright Homes [housing project] in the community org[anization] program, which I liked and I accepted. So—after a couple of months of holiday during the summer—I started as one of the community org[anization] staff members under Shungo Okubo's supervision, and set up office in (an apartment in) Mayor Wright [Homes].

We worked closely with the director of the Mayor Wright housing project and his tenant relations advisor, (Mrs.) Irene Fujiwara, and we had a ball. We were given an apartment which the residents themselves named Hale Kōkua. The whole purpose was to give some of the local women from the Mayor Wright Homes a chance to be trained and serve as outreach workers, paraprofessionals. (Their mission was) to get to know their neighbors and their concerns.

And so, we—oh, I can't remember how many now—but we started maybe with four aides. We called them aides. And then later we had about, maybe six altogether. And we trained them in terms of learning about (community) resources. The (aides) were familiar with a lot of the resources because many of them were recipients themselves of welfare, (nursing services,) et cetera.

We worked very closely with (staff) of the other agencies (such as) the public health nurses, the welfare workers, (University [of Hawai'i Cooperative] Extension workers, et cetera). The staff from these agencies used our facility to meet with the residents or (hold classes). (For

instance, the) University Extension people provided (residents) with nutrition classes, cooking classes, sewing classes, (et cetera).

HY: You say you had an apartment, that this was the meeting place?

JN: Yeah, (Hawaiian Housing provided a two-story apartment for this program. Hale Kōkua became a very popular meeting place for all kinds of activities. The C.O. aides recruited and conducted many of the activities.)

We had one gal—a woman who was particularly good at sewing, so she would have sewing classes. She taught the young teens, as well as the adults, how to sew, how to make dresses, how to mend, and stuff like that. We tried to be practical. And as I said, the extension service people (also conducted) classes. (Someone) donated a lot of books, used books. (I) had a personal friend who was a librarian on maternity leave (who) came and taught our aides how to classify the books. We (set up) a little library that one of the gals (manned) several times a week, so the kids could come and borrow books.

All kinds of things were going on in that apartment. We were busy. We had a lot of fun too. Oh, the clergy counseling members came there too. Some of the ministers were not from the immediate area. I remember Reverend [Richard] Kirkhoffer (who) came all the way from Kahalu'u. The (clergy) took turns once a week providing clergy counseling (to residents at Hale Kōkua).

And then as I said, the aides were assigned certain buildings (within the housing project). They would get to know the residents of (their assigned) building and try to—you know, they would have coffee hours and have the men and women get together and *talk story*, and express (their) concerns. And out of that (emerged a meeting), one of the things that we felt real good about. A number of women (had) complained that at Central Intermediate [School], when their children were caught sniffing glue—you know that was one of the things that the kids were doing at that time—the school promptly would suspend them. The mothers were saying, "You know, when they get suspended, it just means the kids have more time to go and sniff glue."

So we---you know with all this interest expressed we arranged to have the principal, the school counselor, and I think, (the) vice-principal from Central Intermediate (School come to dialogue with our parents). The (school representatives) came one night and—oh, we had a Legal Aid lawyer present—and quite a few, maybe a dozen parents to interface (with each other) and discuss (mutual) concerns. Out of that, the parents were able to get the principal to agree to contact the parent, have the parent come in, and then together agree on (the) kind of punishment (that) should take place (for students caught sniffing glue). The parents were saying, "Make them clean toilets, or something like that. Suspending them only gives them more time to sniff." So (activities that came out of the aides' contact with their fellow residents) we felt real good about.

And another time, together with the housing manager and his assistants, we showed a film outdoors. I remember Mr. [Abel] Fraga [narcotics investigator of the State Department of Health] came as a speaker. And I remember [he spoke] right outside our building. We had a good turnout. It was the aides who could pinpoint the concerns of their fellow neighbors. And we could then take it to the management and jointly try to see how we (could) address some of these issues.

Also, the management, I think, found that the residents began to feel less intimidated by them. And instead of seeing (management) as adversaries, they began to feel okay about letting them know, "Hey, you know this isn't working right," or whatever. And so, we feel that the aides provided some real meaningful kind of services. That was fun. And of course, like any other federally funded program, it doesn't last forever. (Laughs)

HY: But that was part of the . . .

JN: Part of Pālama—well, Pālama Settlement provided the staff.

HY: It was part of their outreach program?

JN: Oh yeah. This was Pālama---we were part of Pālama Settlement. And Pālama Settlement—that was one of the community action programs that Pālama Settlement sponsored. And that I enjoyed very much. (Laughs)

HY: Now was that quite different from previous work?

JN: Oh yeah.

HY: Did they do outreach programs similar to that in the past, or . . .

JN: Not that I was aware of. Because the group work programs were (held in the) building. I guess we (also) had canteen (for teen members) in those days. [Canteens for teens were established in 1955 at Pālama Settlement.] There were more clubs and gym activities, yeah?

HY: In your earlier days at Pālama, were the people that you helped, were the residents usually of Pālama Settlement?

JN: No.

HY: 'Cause like this was an outreach program so was . . .

JN: No. No. The staff, volunteers, and some of the staff lived in Pālama, but the club members and members who participated were people who lived in the area. (Today) Pālama has some residential treatment programs (on the premises).

HY: Yeah, I guess that's what I meant. Did they have residential treatment programs?

JN: No. Not at that time.

HY: Okay, so then after your program with Lorin Gill—oh, maybe I should ask you just about their---since you were around for various administrations . . .

JN: (Chuckles) I sure was.

HY: How---maybe you could kind of, compare their styles or . . .

JN: Well, I don't think that's fair. (Laughs)

HY: Oh, okay.

JN: I mean, because the needs of the community changed, too. That's the beautiful thing about settlement houses. Settlement (houses) and neighborhood centers respond to the (changing) needs of the (neighborhood). And yeah, (each administration) had different styles (or emphases). Lorin is very interested in the outdoors, so he put a lot of energy in the camping program. But he's a mountain guy, so he moved Pālama-by-the-Sea to the mountain after Waialua camp got, I guess, destroyed by the tidal wave [in 1956]. He moved the camp to ['Ōpae'ula], Pālama Uka [Camp]. And when I was in the group work program, I remember taking kids up to Pālama Uka for a weekend camping.

HY: Now he was---was Lorin Gill, a social worker at Pālama while you were there earlier? Had you had . . .

JN: No. He was a graduate student under (Ms.) Maki Ichiyasu, when Maki was the group work program director.

HY: Oh, I just thought maybe you had---you worked with him prior to that.

JN: No, no.

HY: Oh, okay.

JN: I hadn't had any experience with him until he was brought in as director.

HY: Now after that project ended [with Mayor Wright Homes], was that your---did you return to Pālama again after that?

JN: Yeah. Well (pause) not to Pālama Settlement as a staff member. (In August '67) I got very seriously ill. Then went back to work around February '68. At that time I went to the state mental health system at the Convalescent Center in Diamond Head. I had been asked to set up a group work program by (Mrs.) Shirley Hayashi, in September of '67 after---because I (was) finished with the OEO program. But I had gotten very sick in August and September, and so I was convalescing. When the doctor said I could go back to work—I started (in) February (of 1968) at the Convalescent Center. Then I think in September of that year—that would be '68---(the state) mental health systems began to set up regional centers. (The Department of Health, Mental Health Division) decided to open a (regional) center at Pālama Settlement.

HY: This is a state . . .

JN: This is a state mental health system. Okay? So, back I went to Pālama (with the Mental Health Division).

HY: And what did you do?

JN: I was a group worker. Mine was a new position, (I) was trying to develop ways in which I could use groups to (work with) the chronic patients. So it was really a lot of trial and error. I did set up a group for some of the higher functioning patients who came to the day program. We called it a club, and we met as a social club. We would cook, we would plan outings. And

I had about, oh, I guess five or six such young adults.

I remember having a student who was in Dr. [Mitsuo] Aoki's religion class [at the University of Hawai'i] (who helped me with the club). As a part of her assignment she had to find something in the community to participate in. We were very fortunate we had some real nice (volunteers) help, and we had a great time.

HY: When you say some of the chronic patients, what kind of problems . . .

JN: Well most of the patients who came to the day program were people who were maintained in the community rather than in the hospital. They came to the center for all kinds of activities, several times a week. Most of them were diagnosed as schizophrenics (and were) on medication.

HY: Had Pālāma Settlement prior to that been used as a facility for mental patients?

JN: This was the first time. And this was the first time the state mental health system moved out into the community, you see, into (areas) like Pālāma, Windward, Leeward, like that.

HY: So this was quite different actually.

JN: Yeah. In other words, my beat was Pālāma again—like when I was working with the Girl Scouts, I started out working in the area, but it wasn't as a settlement house worker. But when we---when the Pālāma mental health center was opened, at that time Pālāma's function or services were, I guess, changing.

Around that time, I know nationally they were talking about one-stop services for social services. So (public) welfare came in (to Pālāma) also. They used part of the (Strong-Carter) building. And what other groups? Child and Family Services—I remember Patty Lyons [social worker] used to come. They didn't have an office, but I know she used to come. In other words, several other agencies were setting up office [and renting space] within [Pālāma Settlement].

HY: All state agencies?

JN: No. Well, welfare was a state agency. (The) whole idea was for us to kind of work together, so that we didn't duplicate services but cooperate with each other (to serve our neighbors). Apparently that idea didn't last too long. (Laughs)

HY: This was also---no, Lorin Gill was still there when you returned?

JN: I think he was still there. I think he was still there. Yeah, yeah. He was, because I remember I had to pass (his) office to go to the home ec[onomics] building where the club met. Yeah.

HY: And you were there for how long?

JN: Not too long, because (JN counts) '68, '69, about June of 1970, I think it was, I was asked to join the Hospital Improvement Program—HIP we called [it]—at the Hawai'i State Hospital [in Kāne'ohe], a federally funded project. (I replaced) the gal (who) was doing the group-work-

oriented part of the project, (who had taken over as director of the project).

(The mission was to develop a group work oriented program to help the chronic patients to become more independent. This was to be done by developing a program and train the nurses and aides to work with the patients.) Now these were nurses and aides who've been working at the state hospital for a long time. (We were) to train these staff to help the—these would be the real, more severely schizophrenic patients who've been in the hospital system a long time—to try to begin teaching them some social skills, and taking care of their own daily living activities. (This) meant that the staff had to really shift their way of looking at the patients, and (how they) relate to them. Not just, you know, (order the patients): You do this, you do that.

Well, this meant a whole, real change of approach and training (for the) nursing (staff). The gal (who) recruited me was the one that set up the beginning of (the group work) program. But when the director of the project changed jobs, she got promoted to director (and) she recruited me to take over her job. So I tried. That didn't work out too well because my style was definitely different from hers.

I stayed long enough to write up the program that she wanted to have written up. But I didn't---my heart was not in it because I didn't quite see that that was the way to change people who were going to have to carry out the program. But anyway, I did that for a little over a year, I guess. So you see, I shifted around. (Laughs)

HY: And then at that point, did you begin teaching at HCC [Honolulu Community College]?

JN: Yeah. Casual instructor they called me. And I did that for, what, about a year? And then Miss [Arlene] Merrit [the executive director] of Susannah Wesley [Community Center] called me to—actually she had asked me to come in and phase out the outreach to the elderly program that they had started. The person who she had hired to do the job, a nice man, (who) was an ex-fireman or something, (was not able to train or supervise the paraprofessionals to do outreach work) and she just couldn't see the program continuing.

So I was brought in to ease the staff, the paraprofessionals out. But as we started, the (city) decided to continue the program under (their sponsorship). So I got back into the business. Again, the recruiting and training of paraprofessionals to reach out to the elderly community.

HY: Was that a state program?

JN: No, that's another federally funded . . .

HY: Oh, I see.

JN: It started out as a community action program (under Susannah Wesley). (When the) city (became) the sponsor (it was under the) Model Cities. That's what it was. Model Cities. I couldn't think of the term. Community action was with OEO. This was the Model Cities program. You know they had all these federally funded social [programs] under [President] Lyndon B. Johnson, yeah? And then before I knew it, the outreach for the elderly got expanded to become area wide.

I can't remember now whether the state got involved at that point, but the city got out of it and the program got picked up by Catholic Charities. At that time, (it) was (called) Catholic Social Service. Bob [Robert] Omura, who is now director of Pālama Settlement, was the director of Catholic Social Service at the time. Shortly after, Catholic Social Service took over the area-wide program (from the city). There was a funding problem (again) and my assistant who (had his) MSW [Master of Social Work] and (I) were let go. The paraprofessionals (were kept on until funding was obtained). So while I was doing the Model Cities program, again I worked in the (Kalihi) Pālama area. So I keep working in that area for some reason.

HY: Now had you noticed a difference in the clientele, I guess?

JN: Oh yeah. Well definitely, I mean, where I used to work with the younger people, now we're (at) the other end of the spectrum with the elderly. Although my direct responsibilities were (with) the outreach workers, the paraprofessionals. There I had a wide range of people. Many--some of the men were retired people who just needed additional income, or who still had enough energy that (they) wanted to do something else, as well as some housewives. We had an interesting mixture of people.

HY: Besides the elderly, what else was it about them that made them need the services of the outreach [program]?

JN: Oh. Well. The whole idea, I guess, was to seek out elderly who were lonely—might be living alone, or didn't have too much support services—and connect them to (available) resources. And about that time, there were a lot of meal sites they called it, where the elderly would get together and be served (nutritious meals). I think it started as free meals, and then they were asked for (token) contributions. I think there are some meal sites still functioning (today).

Along with the meals, there would be activities. These were all [to keep the] elderly functioning (independently). To make (the program) more accessible, transportation (was also provided). If somebody needed to be taken to see their doctor, there was some help for that, (too). And if nothing else, just companionship. Or the aides were [there to] help [the elderly] understand how to use some of the existing resources, so that if we saw that somebody needed financial assistance, we were to take them (to apply for assistance). If (it was) medical help that they (needed, the aides assisted the elderly to get the necessary service). So it was nutrition of course, and (social) activities. It was a fairly comprehensive kind of program (for the elderly). I think we in Hawai'i are real fortunate to have some terrific programs for the elderly. But that was one of the beginning things.

HY: You had mentioned that when you were---when you worked with the Mayor Wright [Homes] program, that one of the ethnic groups you were working with was Samoans, is that right?

JN: Mm hmm [yes].

HY: Now did you---maybe you could talk about the change if any, of the different ethnic groups of people that you were working with throughout your long off-and-on career there.

JN: Oh. Off and on is right. Well, let's see. When I first started, just before the war, and during the war years, I guess there was a good-sized Japanese, Oriental population in and around Pālama. You know, Desha Lane and all that. Then by the time I came back from Pittsburgh

and went back to work after my first two children, Mayor Wright had come up. We didn't have Mayor Wright before. And so we began having an influx of non-Orientals—Hawaiians, part-Hawaiians, Samoans. And then when I went back, during Jack Nagoshi, Lorin Gill's time, I think we began having some kids coming (from other neighborhoods). By that time, Pālama had developed some athletic programs that—these were the kinds of things that [program director] Earlene Piko, I guess, masterminded. (The after school athletic programs provided) meals, practice, and also the (staff) kept watch over their school (performance). [Piko instituted a policy to insure that some of the athletes attended school before they could use the facilities.] And that program, I think, is still going on at Pālama. But they began working more and more with groups like that. And for some of these programs, (these were) children who were not of the immediate neighborhood.

I remember a girlfriend who was a social worker, too, (who) really liked that program for her (own) son, and she lived out in Kalihi. So the clientele I guess, changed a little bit.

HY: What about the elderly? This last group you worked with.

JN: Well, since I last worked at Pālama, you know they put up that new building where they have—they were serving meals at one time, as another meal site. And they have activities. So I don't know where they all came from, but I imagine they came from (nearby). There is Lanakila senior center not too far from (here). But I'm not that up to date on the percentage of different age[s]. People like Lorin probably can be more up to date (about) that.

HY: And I know initially it started out as servicing indigent population. Did that continue to be true throughout?

JN: You mean, Pālama Settlement?

HY: Yeah.

JN: No, not really. It was really to serve the people in the neighborhood. So I guess from the time it first started, maybe it was more like that, but by the time war came on—World War II and all—it wasn't necessarily indigent people. And I remember when I came back from Western Reserve and I had my cooking classes, the one group I had were young (working) girls. I don't know that they necessarily lived in the neighborhood. Come to think of it, I don't really know. (Chuckles) So it was really just responding to the needs of the area.

HY: Okay then, after that, the outreach—the elderly outreach program, you went into special ed[ucation]? Is that right?

JN: Yeah. Then I went to work as a social worker at the Special Education Center of O'ahu [SECO], from September '73 till August of '77. (This) was a very new experience for me. I didn't really know anything about special ed[ucation], but the job was there. The whole idea was to try to be a bridge between the school and the parents who go through a lot of different kinds of things with their mentally retarded, autistic, (or) learning disabled children. I had to learn a whole new set of stuff.

But I enjoyed (my four years at SECO) because the teachers that the [director at Special Education Center of O'ahu] Sister [Agnes Jerome Murphy] hired were young, idealistic college

grads (with a lot of compassion, love, and energy). They may have had taken a course or two in special ed[ucation], but (most of them were not) trained as special ed[ucation] (teachers). It was just remarkable what they did, you know? They just really, totally loved the children. And yeah, I enjoyed that work.

We (also) had the services of Dr. (Garret Yanagi, who) was a psychologist at Waimano [Training School and Hospital] (at the time). He was available to help us with parent education. Dr. Eleanor Akina was our consultant in child psychiatry. She also was very helpful. I was also fortunate in having Dr. George Fargo, who was a special education professor here at the [University of Hawai'i] campus, as my mentor, and who guided me through my job (at SECO).

I left after four years to finally go (back) to the state mental health system. This time as a worker out in the North Shore, Ko'olauloa Counseling Center, (which) was a satellite center for Windward [Community] Mental Health [Center]. I was there for nine years, until I retired in December of '96. And that job I enjoyed very much. (Laughs)

HY: So the last time that you actually worked with . . .

JN: In the Pālāma area?

HY: Pālāma, Pālāma area was . . .

JN: Was with the outreach to the elderly.

HY: So that was about '73 then.

JN: Yeah. Yeah.

HY: Do you have any, sort of, final thoughts about your experience with Pālāma?

JN: Well, I don't know whether it's final, but I really am grateful that I had the opportunity to play and work at Pālāma. I started out really playing. And the staff that I had the pleasure of working with, and playing with, and all. And you know, it was different groups of people, yeah? Through the years. But I'm very grateful for that experience. That certainly impacted (on) my life, and who I am today.

HY: Do you have any feelings about what you see for Pālāma Settlement in the future, or where it's going?

JN: No. Not particularly. I think each director will take his cue from his or her own experiences (and interests), and respond to the needs of the community and resources. I mean, you may have some dreams, but without the financial resources it is very hard.

But you know I happened to have a chance to go back to Pālāma after the (centennial) luau last fall. Mrs. ["Jackie," Jacqueline] Rath had asked if I would come and go through some of the records that we had kept during the community org[anization] days. It brought back memories and all. Mrs. Rath is doing a fantastic job of going through the archives and organizing it. It's a massive job.

So, while I was there, I saw a little bit more of what's going on now. I think Mr. [Robert] Omura is doing a good job of bringing in various community people to provide—to enrich—the program at Pālama. You know like—what's that entertainer?—there was a TV show not too long ago, I think. What's his name? Is it Brother Noland?

HY: Oh, Brother Noland.

JN: Yeah. I think that's—yeah. He brought a group of young people from—Seattle, was it?—to experience Moloka'i. He also took a group of young people from Pālama and let them spend a week (together) on Moloka'i. You know, he's saying, "I wanna give back to the community, what Pālama gave me." You know, that kind of stuff. I think that's real nice, and I'm sure Pālama will live on. (Laughs)

HY: Anything else?

JN: No. Not really.

HY: Okay. Thank you so much.

END OF INTERVIEW

Reflections of Pālama Settlement

Volume I

**Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

August 1998